

Make Your Own Comet

What you will need:

- Curling ribbon in 3 different colours (find out why below!)
- A chopstick, paddle-pop stick, or long lollipop stick
- Aluminium foil
- Polystyrene ball
- Scissors



What to do:

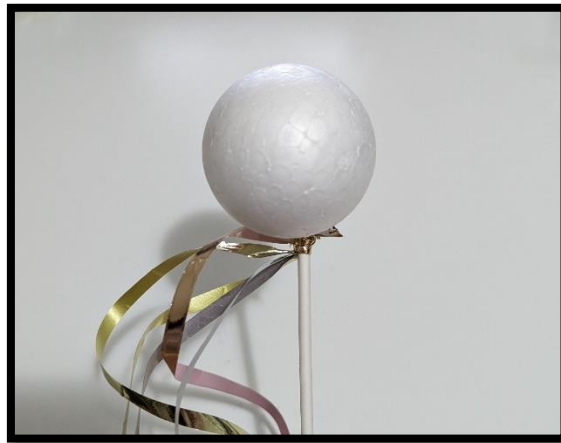
1. Cut five pieces of the curling ribbon: 2 long pieces (about 75cm), 2 medium pieces, and one short piece. It's best if you can make the long pieces one colour, the medium pieces a different colour, and the short piece a third colour.



2. Tie the ribbons around the end of your stick. Make the knot close to the edge of the ribbon to try and get the tail of the comet as long as possible.



3. Push the end of your stick with the ribbons attached, into your polystyrene ball.

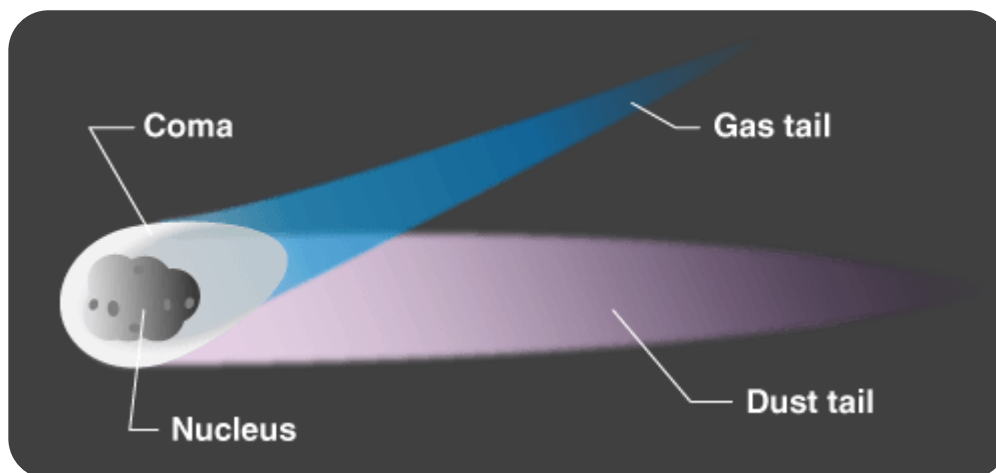


4. Cut or tear off a large piece of aluminium foil, into a square shape.
5. Hold the ribbon pieces to one side and wrap the aluminium foil around your polystyrene ball. Use your hands to pack the foil tightly around the ball.



6. Fly your comet around the room!





Why use different colour ribbons?

If you have three different colours of ribbon, you can make a very accurate comet. Comets have a **nucleus**, which is the main body of the comet. They have a **coma**, which is the glowing part around the nucleus. Then they have two tails: a **dust tail** and a **gas tail**.

In the comet we've made, the tin foil is the **nucleus**. The pink ribbon is the **coma**. The silver ribbon is the **dust tail**, and the gold ribbon is the **gas tail**.

Comet Facts!



A **comet** is a large object made of dust, rock and ice. Just like Earth, comets **orbit** (travel in a curved path around) the Sun. Earth takes about 365 days to orbit the Sun, but comets take much longer. Some comets take less than 200 years to make this trip, others take more than 250,000 years! There are billions of comets, but they are mostly far out in the **solar system**.

John Tebbutt was an **astronomer** from Windsor who studied comets. He determined their positions and calculated their orbits. He even discovered two Great Comets, one in 1861 and one in 1881.

Great Comets are spectacular in the night sky - much brighter than other comets. They can even be seen without a telescope!